INNOVATION
the MAZE AGENCY
14

INNOVATION™

The Distinctions Blur As The Books Get Better

When Innovation began, we decided to have two distinct lines of comics.

The full-color projects would run the gamut from ***THE MAZE AGENCY*** and ***LEGENDS OF THE STARGRAZERS*** to ***Anne Rice's THE VAMPIRE LESTAT*** and ***CYBERPUNK***.

The black-and-white line, under the All-American Comics banner, would feature interesting projects that color didn't seem right for -- such as ***GNATRAT: THE MOVIE***. And ***STRAW MEN***. And ***SCARLET KISS: THE VAMPYRE***.

The reasoning for the separation seemed logical -- we wanted the Innovation logo to be synonymous with full-color projects. And in that, we succeeded.

The glitch was in outside misperceptions. Without the Innovation logo, fans pre-ordering books through stores or subscription services (some liking us enough to order *all* Innovation titles) were skipping the black-and-white line. Even our adding the small words "Innovation" above the All-American logo weren't enough.

So: Effective this month, we're making a change. All the full-color Innovation books will still be here, but we're dropping the "All-American" logo.

The first book to feature the new system is ***Stephen Sullivan & Tim Truman's NEWSTRALIA #4***. I think you'll find that this book proves my point; it has the same quality level of story, art, and lettering (as well as a spiffy Timothy Truman cover) as our color books.

The only difference is that the book is in black-and-white...and the art is being created with that in mind.

But that's just to offer you a taste of what's ahead. Now that ***STRAW MEN*** and ***OVERTURE*** and ***DEADFISH*** have completed their runs, we can offer a new direction in stories and artwork with books we'll premiere in July and August.

Gerard Jones, popular writer of *The Shadow Strikes!* and *The Trouble With Girls*, is working on ***THE TIMEDRIFTER*** series in B&W.

Two other series, with the working titles ***CELESTIAL MECHANICS*** and ***SCARAMOUCH***, are by relative newcomers but are every bit as good and strong as ***TIMEDRIFTER*** or ***CYBERPUNK*** or ***HERO ALLIANCE***.

We've other projects in the works as well, but we'll announce 'em as they're completed.

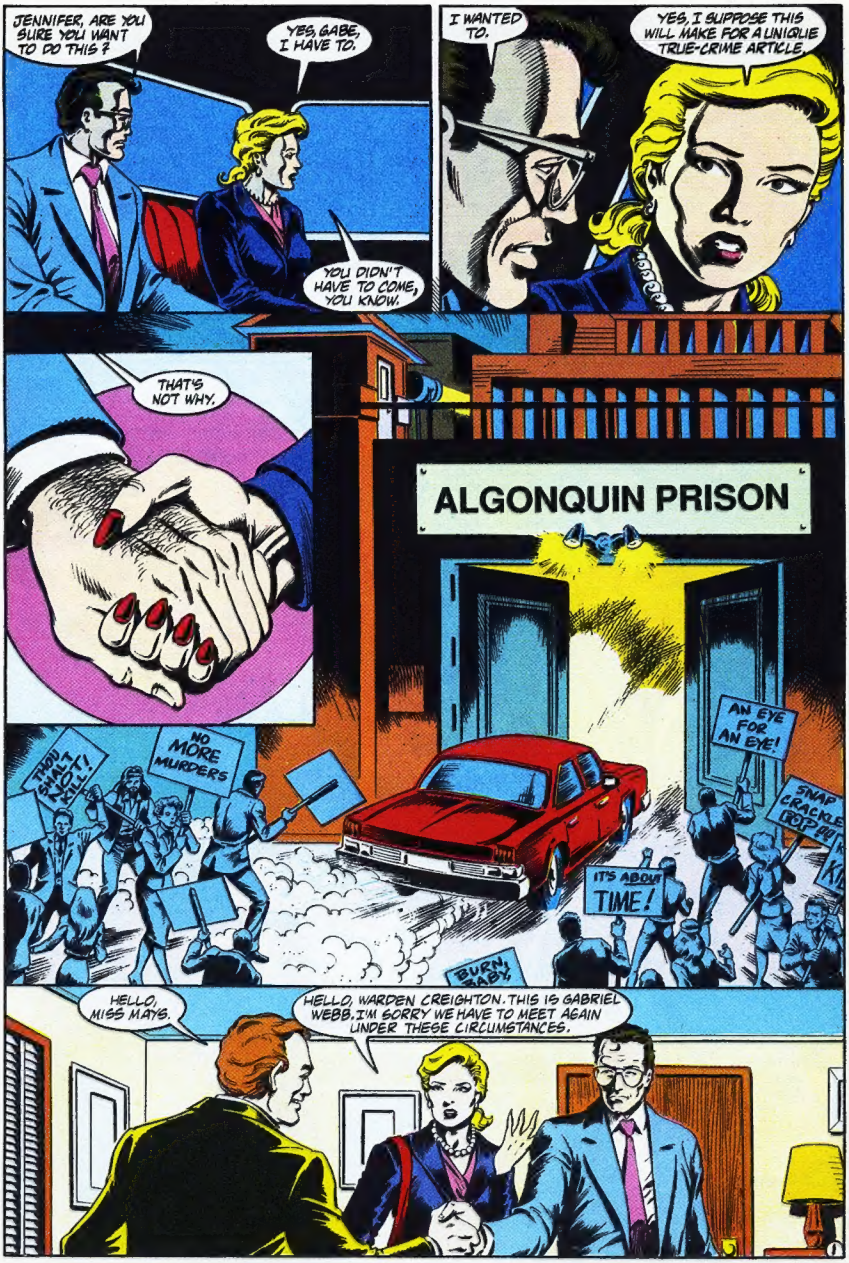
No two of the new line of titles are anything alike, with the exceptions of good story, good art, and a scheduling that will ensure on-time appearances on your comics shop shelves.

The Innovation B&W books will be treated as a quality line of titles, rather than just "a few more black-and-whites" tossed out there. Maybe we should call 'em "full process black-and-whites," though I don't think everybody would understand the meaning.

So how about this: Look for 'em this summer -- I think you'll be pleased at what you see.

-- David Campiti
March, 1990

THE MAZE AGENCY®
Vol. 1, No. 14, July 1990 issue.
Published by the INNOVATIVE CORPORATION, 3622 Jacob Street, Wheeling, WV 26003, (304) 232-7701. David Campiti, President & Publisher. Diana Light, Operations Manager. Scott Rockwell, Art Director. Jim Elliott, Licensing & Marketing Director. Story, text & art © 1990 Mike W. Barr. Other editorial material © 1990 Innovative Corp. The MAZE Agency, all prominent characters in this issue, and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are ® 1990 Mike W. Barr. Innovation logo TM 1990 Innovative Corp. All rights reserved. Color separations by Susan Glod. Cover colors by Scott Rockwell. For advertising rates or licensing information, call (304) 232-7703. Fax #304-232-4010. Printed by Boyd Press. *It's an Innovation Publication!*

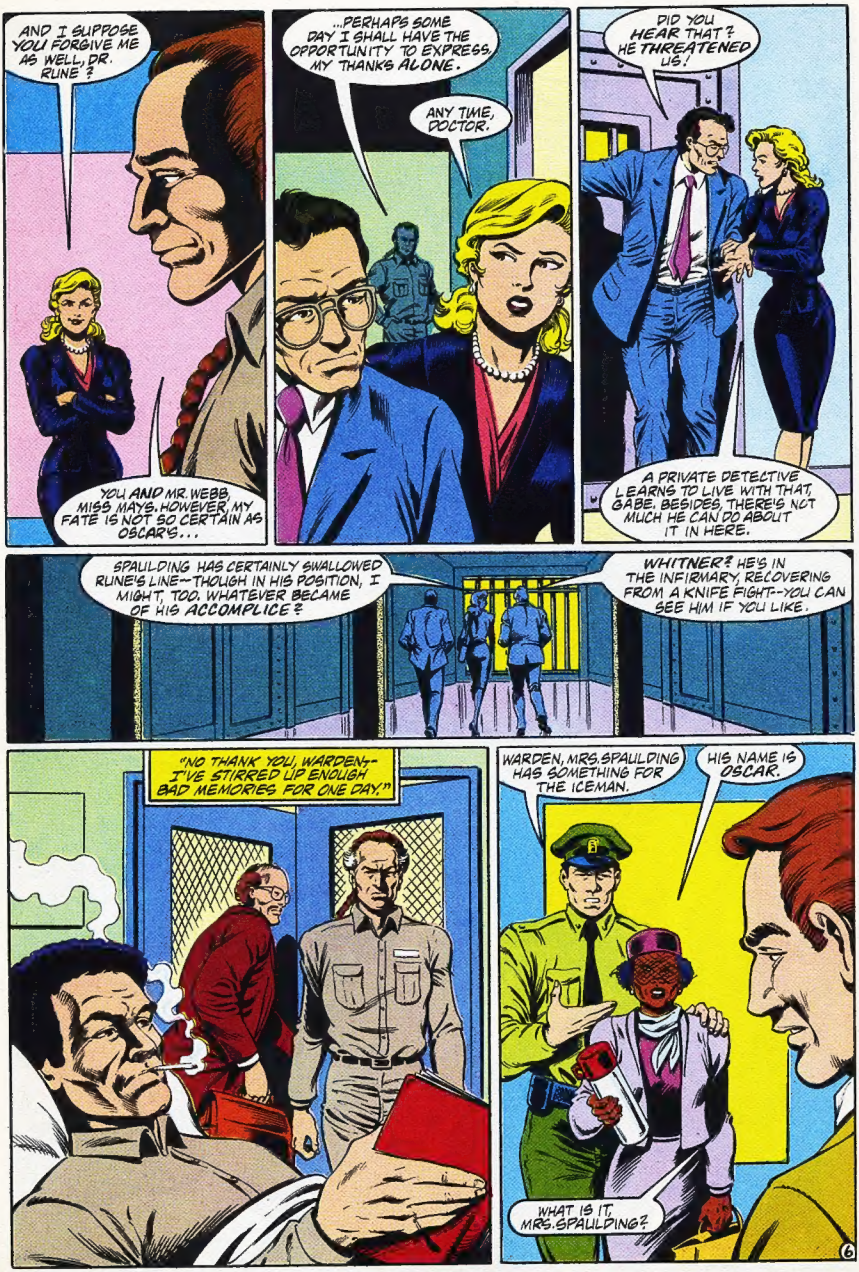

JENNIFER, ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS?
YES, GABE, I HAVE TO.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO COME, YOU KNOW.
I WANTED TO.
YES, I SUPPOSE THIS WILL MAKE FOR A UNIQUE TRUE-CRIME ARTICLE.
THAT'S NOT WHY.
ALGONQUIN PRISON
THOU SHALT NOT KILL!
NO MORE MURDERS
AN EYE FOR AN EYE!
SNAP CRACKLE
IT'S ABOUT TIME!
BURN, BABY!
HELLO, MISS MAYS.
HELLO, WARDEN CREIGHTON. THIS IS GABRIEL WEBB. I'M SORRY WE HAVE TO MEET AGAIN UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.

the MAZE AGENCY
MIKE W. BARR Writer/Creator
ROBB PHIPPS Pencils
RICK MAGYAR Inks
VICKIE WILLIAMS Letters
SUSAN GLOD Colors
BEFORE MIDNIGHT
I WISH I COULD SAY I'M SORRY, TOO--BUT I'M NOT.
2

WE'VE HAD THE CHAIR REWIRED AND THIS FAN INSTALLED--IT PULLS UP ALL THE FUMES FROM THE EXECUTION.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. SOMETIMES I THINK WE MAKE IT TOO EASY ON OURSELVES.
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL.
THE EXECUTIONERS STAND HERE. THERE ARE TWO, YOU KNOW--
YES, THAT WAY, NEITHER ONE KNOWS WHO'S DELIVERING THE ACTUAL CHARGE.
THIS IS WHERE YOU'LL BE SITTING, MISS MAYS... YOU AND THE OTHER WITNESSES.
I SEE.
WE HAD THE PHONE COMPANY HERE THIS MORNING--HAVE TO HAVE A DIRECT LINE TO THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, OF COURSE.
YES, I UNDERSTAND HE'S STILL CONSIDERING A REPRIEVE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DEMANDING THIS EXECUTION FOR YEARS.
AND I'M ONE OF THEM, MISS MAYS. YOU KNOW, THIS CHAIR WAS INSTALLED WHEN I WAS APPOINTED WARDEN OF ALGONQUIN.
NOW IT'S BEING REACTIVATED, AND I'M RETIRING.
2

BUT NOT BEFORE YOU DID YOUR DUTY, WARDEN CREIGHTON. I'M SURE MY SALLY, WHEREVER SHE IS, KNOWS THAT.
HELLO, MR. JOHNSON. I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE HERE.
I'M HERE FOR THE SAME REASON YOU ARE, MISS MAYS. TO SEE THE MONSTER WHO KILLED MY LITTLE GIRL PUT TO DEATH.
"HE'S NOT A MONSTER, MR. JOHNSON...
...HE'S MY SON. HE DID WRONG, AND HE'S GOING TO PAY, BUT HE'S NOT A MONSTER. YOU'D KNOW THAT IF YOU KNEW HIM LIKE I DO.
I'LL TAKE YOU TO SEE OSCAR IN A FEW MINUTES, MRS. SPAULDING.
ACTUALLY, THE ICEMAN ASKED TO SEE YOU, MISS MAYS--I THINK HE'S THROUGH WITH HIS COUNSELLING NOW. I'LL UNDERSTAND IF YOU DON'T...
I HELPED PUT HIM HERE, WARDEN. IF HE WANTS TO SEE ME, LET HIM.
ARE YOU OKAY, ACE? I'M NOT USED TO YOU BEING SO QUIET.
I'M FINE, JEN. IT'S JUST...I DON'T KNOW IF I COULD KILL--EVEN SOMEONE WHO DESERVED IT.
IT'S NOTHING YOU NEED TO APOLOGIZE FOR, GABE. WHICH ONE OF THE COMMANDMENTS SAYS "THOU SHALT NOT KILL"?
THE SIXTH. BUT THE HEBREW VERB USED THERE ACTUALLY MEANS "MURDER," INDICATING INTENTIONAL SLAYING. STILL, I DON'T THINK I COULD.

YOU SAID THE ICEMAN WAS BEING COUNSELLED, WARDEN-- I DIDN'T THINK HE BELIEVED IN ANY RELIGION.
THERE ARE NO ATHEISTS IN FOXHOLES, MISS MAYS. BESIDES, HIS COUNSELLOR IS HARDLY AN ORDAINED CLERGYMAN. SORRY FOR THE SEARCH; YOU UNDERSTAND.
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU IS NOT YOUR FAULT, OSCAR. THE GUILT AND THE BLAME ARE SOCIETY'S. THE JOHNSON GIRL'S BLOOD IS ON THEIR HANDS, NOT YOURS. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
I'M TRYIN' TO, DR. RUNE...
WELL, HELLO, DR. RUNE. I KNEW YOU WERE WORKING IN THE DISPENSARY, BUT I'M NOT SURPRISED TO FIND YOU GO IN FOR COUNSELLING, AS WELL.
MISS MAYS, MR. WEBB. HOW NICE OF YOU TO SEE US. OSCAR WOULD LIKE TO SAY SOMETHING TO YOU, WOULDN'T YOU, OSCAR?
I FORGIVE YOU, MISS MAYS.
WHAT?
I SAID I FORGIVE YOU-- FOR HUNTIN' ME DOWN, FOR PUTTIN' ME IN THIS PLACE, AND FOR RUININ' MY LIFE.
YOU RUINED YOUR OWN LIFE, SPAULDING, YEARS BEFORE WE EVER MET.


AND I SUPPOSE YOU FORGIVE ME AS WELL, DR. RUNE?
YOU AND MR. WEBB, MISS MAYS. HOWEVER, MY FATE IS NOT SO CERTAIN AS OSCAR'S...
...PERHAPS SOME DAY I SHALL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS MY THANKS ALONE.
ANY TIME, DOCTOR.
DID YOU HEAR THAT? HE THREATENED US!
A PRIVATE DETECTIVE LEARNS TO LIVE WITH THAT, GABE. BESIDES, THERE'S NOT MUCH HE CAN DO ABOUT IT IN HERE.
SPAULDING HAS CERTAINLY SWALLOWED RUNE'S LINE--THOUGH IN HIS POSITION, I MIGHT, TOO. WHATEVER BECAME OF HIS ACCOMPLICE?
WHITNER? HE'S IN THE INFIRMARY, RECOVERING FROM A KNIFE FIGHT--YOU CAN SEE HIM IF YOU LIKE.
"NO THANK YOU, WARDEN;-- I'VE STIRRED UP ENOUGH BAD MEMORIES FOR ONE DAY."
WARDEN, MRS. SPAULDING HAS SOMETHING FOR THE ICEMAN.
HIS NAME IS OSCAR.
WHAT IS IT, MRS. SPAULDING?

IT'S MY SPECIAL TEA. OSCAR ALWAYS LIKES IT SO.
WE'LL HAVE TO HAVE DR. EASTBROOK ANALYZE IT.
JUST LIKE ALWAYS.
IT WON'T TAKE LONG, MRS. SPAULDING. JUST POUR ME A SMALL SAMPLE.
TALK TO ME, HONEY-- ABOUT ANYTHING EXCEPT WHY WE'RE HERE.
ANYTHING...?
WELL, YOU REALIZE WE STILL HAVEN'T DECIDED ABOUT MY MOVING IN WITH YOU.
I CERTAINLY HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN ABOUT IT.
I WANT TO BE WITH YOU, JEN-- IN THE GOOD TIMES AND THE BAD. I'D PROPOSE MARRIAGE IF I THOUGHT YOU'D SAY "YES," BUT...
I'M CERTAINLY NOT READY FOR THAT. BUT WE MIGHT TRY--
"DISCUSSING YOUR FUTURE, MISS MAYS? AT LEAST YOU HAVE ONE."
I DIDN'T THINK WE'D BE SEEING YOU HERE, MS. DUVALL.
A DEFENSE ATTORNEY TAKES THE BITTER WITH THE SWEET, AND OSCAR'S EXECUTION IS DEFINITELY ONE OF THE SYSTEM'S FAILURES.
I SUPPOSE YOU CAN CONSOLE YOURSELF WITH THE FACT THAT THIS EXECUTION WILL MAKE YOUR BOOK ABOUT THE SPAULDING CASE A BEST-SELLER.
I HOPE IT DOES! PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS AGAINST MEN LIKE OSCAR, THE POOR, THE MINORITIES, THE--

HOW DO YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT THE PUBLISHING WORLD?
NOT NOW, GABE...
EXCUSE ME, MS. DUVALL-- BUT WHILE I'M SURE YOUR BOOK WILL TELL EVERYONE ABOUT THE ICEMAN...
...PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO TELL EVERYONE ABOUT MY DAUGHTER.
MS. DUVALL? IF YOU WANT TO SEE SPAULDING, YOU'D BETTER COME NOW. YOU'LL NEED TO BE SEARCHED FIRST.
RIGHT AWAY, WARDEN.
I'LL TAKE THAT, MS. DUVALL.
ALL TESTS NEGATIVE. THERE'S NO PROBLEM WITH YOUR THERMOS, MRS. SPAULDING.
DID YOU THINK THERE WOULD BE, DOCTOR...?
...YOU DON'T NEED ANY FANCY TEST, LET ME SHOW YOU.
MRS. SPAULDING, THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT. YOU CAN GO IN NOW.
MRS. SPAULDING, I'M SO SORRY...
I KNOW YOU DID EVERYTHING YOU COULD, CHILD.

Comics Buyer's Guide
Fan Awards for 1989

Welcome to the *CBG* Fan Awards. ***Comics Buyer's Guide***, a weekly newspaper devoted to the world of comic books, sponsors these awards to let *you*, the readers, tell the world which comic books are your favorites. Just fill out the ballot and send it to the address below.

1. Favorite Editor .....

2. Favorite Writer .....

3. Favorite Penciller .....

4. Favorite Inker .....

5. Favorite Colorist .....

6. Favorite Letterer .....

7. Favorite Cover Artist .....

8. Favorite Comic-Book Story .....

9. Favorite Comic Book .....

10. Favorite Limited Comic-Book Series .....

11. Favorite Original Graphic Novel or Album .....

12. Favorite Reprint Graphic Novel or Album .....

13. Favorite Character .....

14. Favorite Publication about Comics .....

Only material with a 1989 cover date can win. Votes for projects that did not have a 1989 publication date will not be counted.

Copy this ballot and give it to your friends, so they can vote, too. ***Anyone who loves comics can vote*** — but only ***vote*** once. If you vote more than once, all of your votes will be thrown out. Vote only in the categories you want, and ignore any you don't. ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** is not eligible for Category 14.

Every voter in the United States will get a *free copy* of ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** #872, dated Aug. 3, 1990, unless you already have a current or expired subscription to ***CBG***. That issue will carry the list of winners! Votes from other countries will be counted, but we regret that free copies of ***CBG*** can't be sent, unless your vote is accompanied by $2 in U.S. funds to cover handling and shipping.

Mail your ballot individually in a single envelope ***by June 16, 1990***, to:

Comics Buyer's Guide *Fan Awards*
700 East State Street
Iola, Wisconsin 54990

Name ..... **Age** ..... **Male Female** (circle one)

Street or Box .....

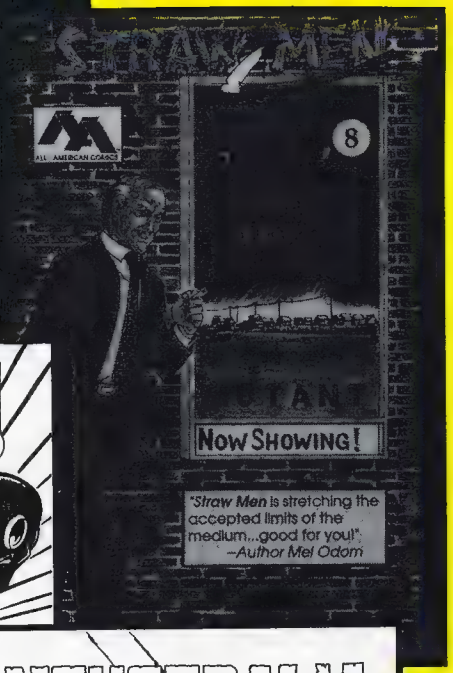
City, State, and **ZIP** .....

Please type or print your votes and information clearly.
You need not cut or tear out this page in order to vote! Copies are acceptable and will be counted.

STRAW MEN #8
"The End" of a different kind of mutant story

OVERTURE #2
Sputnik, Blatherskite and The Lunatic Fringe... needless say more?

NEWSTRALIA #4
Thunder Down Under! Cover by Tim Truman



INNOVATION™

B & W Tragedy, Comedy, and Adventure --
ON SALE NOW!

HELLO, MOMMA.
DON'T YOU STAND WHEN A LADY ENTERS THE ROOM? I TAUGHT YOU BETTER THAN THAT.
I'M SORRY, MOMMA.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, SON, WE DON'T HAVE LONG.
THANK YOU, WARDEN. I KNOW YOU'RE ONLY DOING WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.
I WISH IT WERE EASIER FOR ALL OF US, MRS. SPAULDING.

ALL THE CONVICTS ARE SECURED, SIR.
SEE THAT THEY STAY THAT WAY, UNTIL MORNING.
TELL THEM TO BRING SPAULDING IN.
FRANKLIN
10

GAAAAK!
HE'S DEAD.
FRANKLIN

DEAD? HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
I CAN'T TELL WITHOUT AN AUTOPSY... SOME SORT OF POISON, I BELIEVE.
MRS. SPAULDING, MAY I HAVE THAT THERMOS, PLEASE?
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO MY BOY?
TELL ALL THE GUARDS TO KEEP THIS QUIET, DO YOU UNDERSTAND? THE CONVICTS ARE NERVOUS ENOUGH, NOW, AND UNTIL WE STRAIGHTEN THIS OUT--
YESSIR.
SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG IN THE DEATH ROOM--THE ICEMAN DIED BEFORE HE WAS SUPPOSED TO! WARDEN SAYS TO KEEP THE LID ON!
RIGHT.
...DUNNO WHAT HAPPENED, BUT THE ICEMAN WENT BEFORE THEY PULLED THE SWITCH! MURDERED, MAYBE!
JEEZ, COULDN'T THEY EVEN LET THE GUY DIE WITH A LITTLE PRIDE?
ICE-MAN!
ICE-MAN!
"I UNDERSTAND, WARDEN..."

IT'S NO MYSTERY!

The best detective stories in comics are available every month in Mike W. Barr's ***THE MAZE AGENCY.*** Look for these titles in your local comics shop now or use the order form below:

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ANGRY SHADOWS **(Trade Pbk.)**
#1 -- Horror anthology by Bolton, Mooney, Phillips, others. PLEASE NOTE: *The Vampire Lestat* previewed! ($4.95)

ANNE RICE'S THE VAMPIRE LESTAT **(Full Color)**
#1 -- Authorized adaptation, beautiful painted art, Bolton cover. First Printing -- SOLD OUT FROM THE PUBLISHER! Available in good condition only ($40.00)
#1 -- Second printing. SOLD OUT FROM THE PUBLISHER! ($5.00)
#2 -- First printing ($10.00) SOLD OUT FROM THE PUBLISHER!
#3 -- First printing ($2.50)
#4 -- First printing ($2.50)

BEAST WARRIORS OF SHAOLIN Graphic Novel **#1 -- Released as *Pied Piper Gr. Album #3* ($8.95)**
#1 -- Glen Johnson art! ($3.50)
#2 -- Martial arts ($3.00)
#3 -- "New Breed" preview ($2.50)

BLACKSHARD: 3-D
#1 -- Top Ray Zone effects! ($6.50)

BLIP AND THE C.C.A.D.S.
#1 -- Artists rampage! ($2.00)

CAPTAIN OATMEAL
#1 -- A bran-new kind of hero ...not just for breakfast, any-more! By Broderick ($2.25)

COBALT BLUE **(Full Color)**
By Mike Gustovich & Keith Pollard
#1 -- He's back! All-new ($1.95)
#2 -- The colorful adventure concludes ($1.95)
***Graphic Novel* #1 -- Gustovich & Pollard ($6.95)**

COMICS ON DISK: CYBERPUNK
(Full Color Computer Software)
#1 -- Atari ST Version ($19.95)
#1 -- Amiga Version ($19.95)

COMICS ON DISK: THE JUSTICE MACHINE **(Computer software)**
#1 -- Atari ST Version ($14.95)
#1 -- Amiga Version ($14.95)
#1 -- Macintosh Version ($14.95)
#1 -- IBM PC Version ($14.95)

CYBERPUNK **(Full Color)**
#1 -- Gorgeous full-painted art. *"Bad Dreams."* ($2.50)
#2 -- Love means never having to type "delete." ($2.00)
***Graphic Novel* #1 -- ($6.95)**
Book Two #1 -- Doug Talalla painted art! ($2.25)
Book Two #2 -- ($2.25)

CYBERPUNK PIN-UP **(Full Color)**
The wraparound covers to issue #1, shipped flat (.50 each) (3 for $1.00)

DAEMON MASK
#1 -- Gruesome horror...not for the squeamish ($2.00)

DEADFISH BEDEVILED
#1 -- Jackson Guice cover ($2.25)

THE DEAD HEAT
#1 -- Manga fans treat. Limited distribution! ($2.25)

EAST MEETS WEST
(Full Color) #1 -- by Paul S. Power, Dave Stevens, Nestor Redondo & more! Ltd. distribution ($2.50)

GAJIT GANG
#1 -- Children create Goldbergian gadgets; for younger readers ($2.00)

G.I. R.A.M.B.O.T.
(Full Color) #1 -- Randy at war. Visceral. Recommended! ($2.50)

GNATRAT: THE MOVIE!
#1 -- From the pages of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles! Stunning parody of *Batman* movie, by Mark Martin! First printing ($2.50)
"Gnatrat: The Dark Gnat Returns"
#1 -- By Mark Martin! First, original Dark Knight parody. Highly recommended. ($5.00)
#1 -- "Happy Birthday" Gnatrat at age 100 ($5.00)

GREYLORE **(Full Color)**
#1 -- Bo Hampton art! ($7.00)
#2 -- Hampton/Statema art ($5.00)
#3 -- Hampton/Garzon art ($4.00)
#4 -- Hampton art ($4.00)
#5 -- Hampton art; Bart Sears cover! Limited distribution! ($4.00)

THE GROUP LARUE **(Full Color)**
#1 -- Mike Baron vs gamers, from the creator of *Nexus*! ($2.00)
#2 -- Zellerbachs attack! ($1.95)
#3 -- Dazzling denouement ($1.95)
Graphic Novel #1 -- Hawbaker cover! ($8.95)

HERO ALLIANCE: END OF THE GOLDEN AGE **(Full Color)**
#1 -- Legend retold, w/new Bart Sears/Ron Lim art! First printing -- sold out from publisher! ($15.00)
#1 -- First printing, signed by the author ($20.00)
#1 -- Second printing ($1.95)
#2 -- Lim/Sears art. New Statema "Rage" -- sold out from the publisher! ($12.00)
#3 -- Ron Lim, Brasfield art. ($3.00)

HERO ALLIANCE MONTHLY
(Full Color) All-new regular series
#1 -- Ron Lim new art! Limited quantities available ($2.50)
#2 -- Ron Lim new art! Great story, extra pages ($2.00)
#3 -- Craig Brasfield art! Plus Ron Lim *Stargrazers*! ($2.00)
#4 -- Bob Ingersoll story! ($1.95)
#5 -- Sexy "Kris" Ron Lim cover! Excellent Mark Jones art ($1.95)
#6 -- How can you tell hero from villain without a scorecard? ($50.00) RARE!
#7 -- Kris vs Marc! "Shredded costume" Kris cover ($1.95)
 # 8 -- In the wake of her demise... ($1.95)
ANNUAL #1 **-- Paul Smith art and cover! Recommended! ($2.75)**

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(Full Color) *Nearly sold out!*
#1 -- Limited edition, signed and numbered by the author ($19.95)
#1 -- Unsigned version ($16.95)

HERO ALLIANCE
(Full Color) Pub. by Wonder Color
#1 -- The original, long out of print! Ron Lim/Craig Brasfield art ($3.50)

HERO ALLIANCE: THE GRAPHIC NOVEL **(Full Color)**
#1 -- The original Pied Piper graphic album, re-distributed by Innovation! *Nearly sold out* ($12.95)

HERO ALLIANCE TEAM POSTER (Full Color) #1 -- Glorious 2' x 3', by Ron Lim & Bill Anderson! ($5.95)

INNOVATION PREVIEW SPECIAL (Full Color) #1 -- Scarce! Baron, Lim, Sears, Truman, more! ($5.00)

INNOVATION SOLICITATIONS (Full Color) #1 -- The ultimate collectible! As above, but never sold in stores! ($7.50)

INNOVATION SOLICITATIONS #1 - #14 & Bookstore -- The complete preview collections, never offered for sale, only made available to stores! ($20.00)

JACK FROST #1 -- Classic film noir vampire mystery! ($3.00) #2 -- The saga concludes. VanHook art ($3.00)

THE NEW JUSTICE MACHINE (Full Color) Mini & Reg. Series #1 -- By artist of *Cyberpunk*! ($2.50) #2 -- Artist jam issue! ($2.00) #3 -- Conclusion! ($1.95) #1 -- Regular series returns! ($1.95) #2 -- The Ragnarok Portfolio! ($1.95) #3 -- Part Two! Gustovich complete art! ($1.95)

JUSTICE MACHINE SUMMER SPECIAL (Full Color) #1 -- John Byrne cover! ($2.75)

KAMIKAZE CAT #1 -- The book that embarrassed an industry! See the mud sling ($2.50)

Lawrence & Lim's EX-MUTANTS #1 -- First printing! Ron Lim "good girl" art ($5.00) #2 -- Drug issue! Lim art ($3.00) #3 -- Ron Lim art ($2.50) #4 -- Ripped costumes, "tease" cover. Ron Lim art ($2.25) #5 -- The New Humans debut. Lim/Atkinson art ($2.00) #6 -- Only authorized 1st printing. Lim art. Scarce! ($3.50) #7 -- Last authorized issue; 1st printing. Lim art. Scarce ($3.00) #8 -- Bootleg issue! The first produced without authorization from the creators. Rare! ($5.00) #1 -- Special Edition, new pages. Lim art ($2.50)

Lawrence & Lim's EX-MUTANTS: ERIN MINI-SERIES #1 -- Authorized 1st printing. Rare! Sizzling Ron Lim art ($10.00)

Lawrence & Lim's THE NEW HUMANS #1 -- Limited distribution! Lim art ($3.50) #2 -- Humans vs England? Lim cover ($3.00) #3 -- Scarce! Ron Lim bondage cover! ($3.00)

LEGENDS OF THE STARGRAZERS (Full Color) The finest "good girl in space" art this side of Dave Stevens! #1 -- Adam Hughes cover. Thompson/Elliott art. Sexy. ($2.50) #2 -- Hughes, Thompson/Elliott, Yeates art. Julie in the sonic shower! ($2.25) #3 -- Hughes, Thompson/Elliott, *hot* bondage issue! SOLD OUT FROM THE PUBLISHER ($5.00) #4 -- Hughes, Thompson/Elliott, Yeates art. Bradbury hommage ($1.95) #5 -- Hughes, Thompson/Elliott, Tsuda art. Treasure hunt! ($1.95) #6 -- More pages! "All The Sins That Are My Life" are the startling secrets of Julie Green ($2.50)

LEGENDS OF THE STARGRAZERS PORTFOLIO *Seven* art-sized plates by Adam Hughes. Gorgeous! ($12.95)

LEGENDS OF THE STARGRAZERS POSTER (Full Color) #1 -- Stunning 2' x 3', art by Matt Thompson & Randy Elliott ($5.95)

LEGENDS OF THE STARGRAZERS GRAPHIC NOVEL (Full Color) #1 -- 100 pgs., Hughes cover ($9.95) #2 -- Sexy Thompson/Elliott cover! ($9.95)

LUNATIC FRINGE (Full Color) (also see *OVERTURE*) #1 -- John (*Superman*) Statema art! ($2.00) #2 -- What if Tokyo's monsters were real? Statema art ($2.00) RAGGED SET (of 1 & 2) ($3.50)

MANGLE TANGLE TALES (Full Color) #1 -- Cardstock format. Intro by Harlan Ellison! ($2.95)

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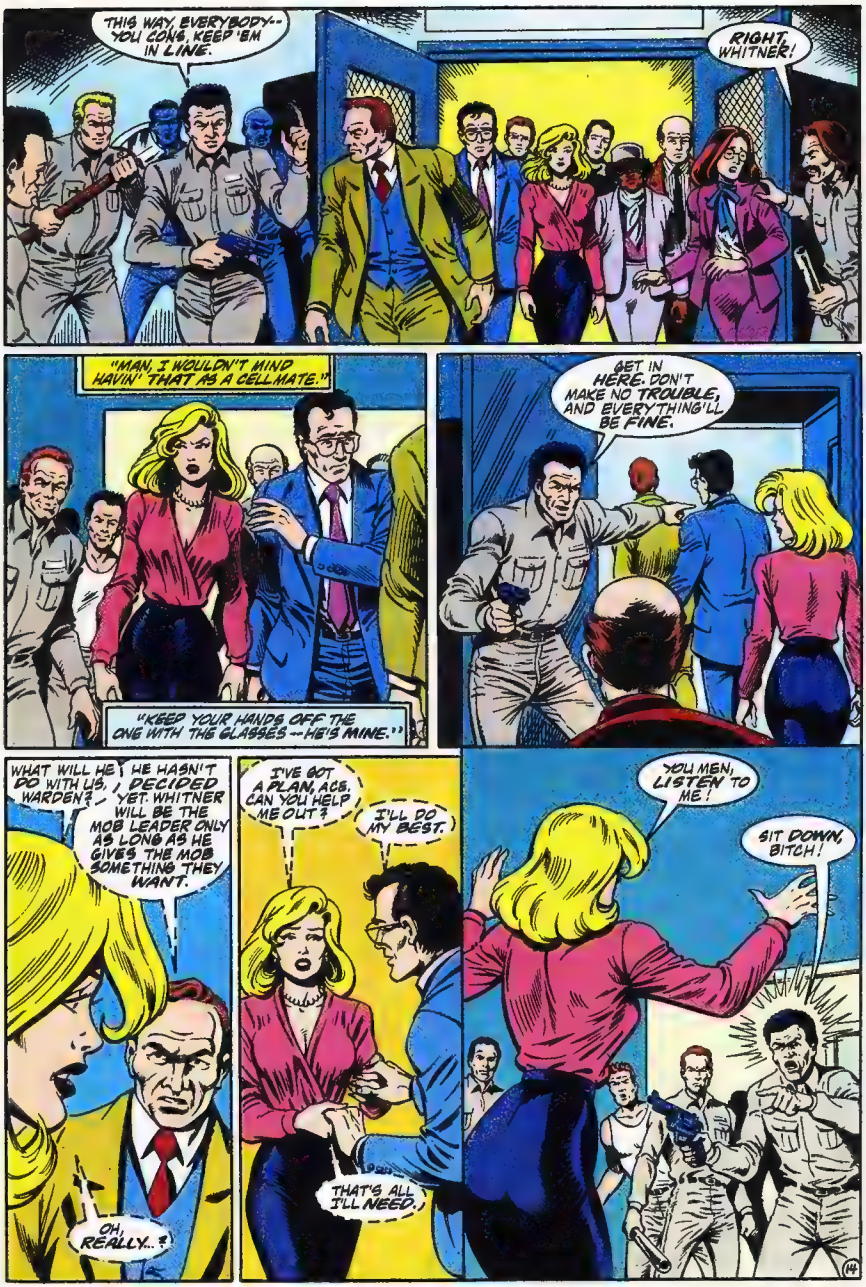
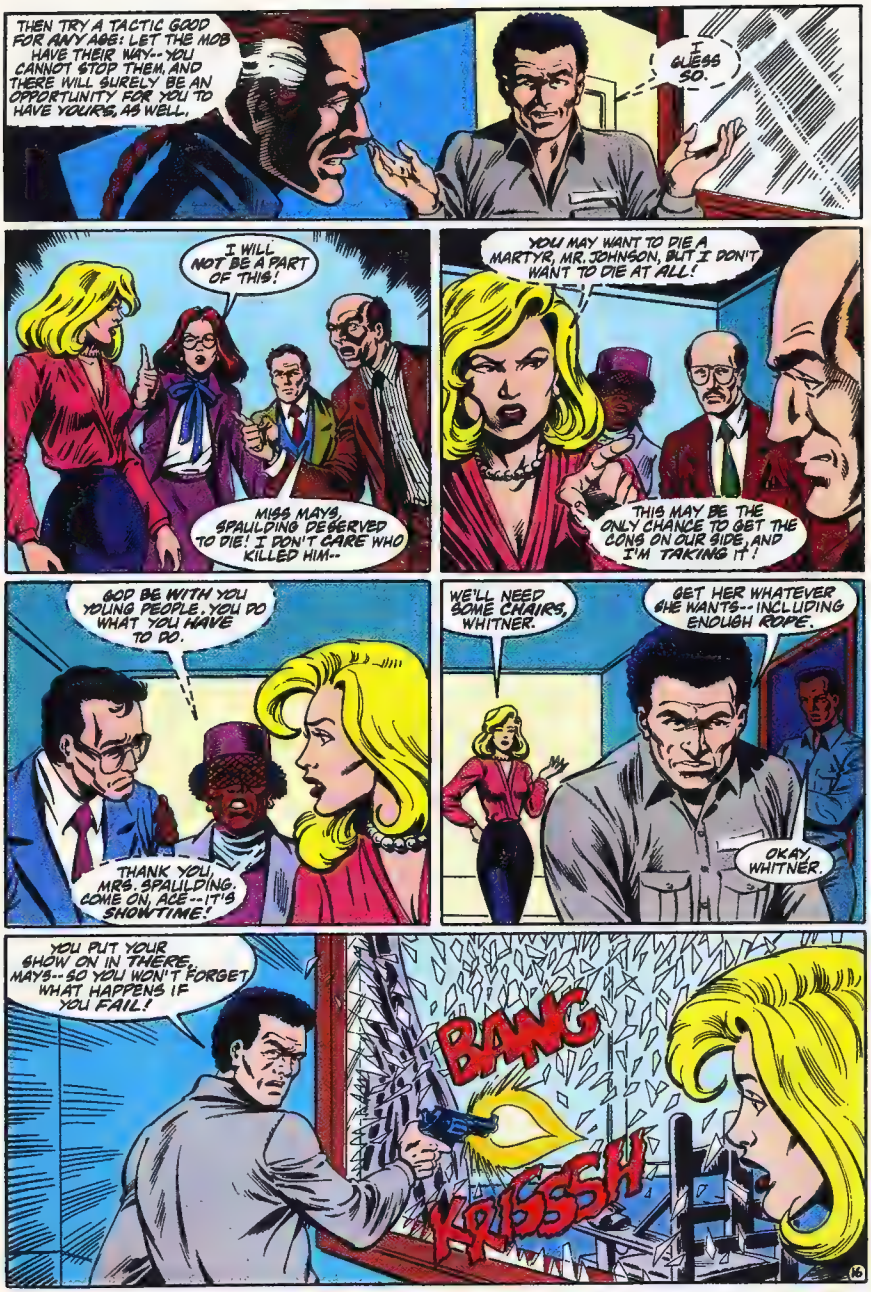
...BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE MEN IN HERE, SIR, THEY'RE UNDER CONTROL.
WRONG, SUCKER--WE'RE IN CONTROL!
WHANG
UNHHHH...
DO YOU HAVE THE EQUIPMENT TO PERFORM THE NECESSARY TESTS IN YOUR DISPENSARY, DOCTOR?
I BELIEVE SO, MISS MAYS...
HELLO, WARDEN! NOW WE'RE GONNA SEE HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES.
...AND ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE CONVICTS IN ALGONQUIN PRISON ARE SECURE, WE HAVE LEARNED THAT THOSE IN THE DISPENSARY HAVE BEEN RELEASED, AND HAVE FOUND WEAPONS--
PRISON
--AND ARE HOLDING THE WARDEN AND SEVERAL WITNESSES TO THE EXECUTION OF "ICEMAN" SPAULDING HOSTAGE...
WE GOT 'EM ALL ROUNDED UP, WHITNER, INCLUDING THOSE BASTARD EXECUTIONERS. AND HERE'S THE REST OF THE BULLETS.
PLEASE, WE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH--
SHUT UP, YOU! TIME THE CHICKENS CAME HOME TO ROOST!
13


THIS WAY, EVERYBODY-- YOU CONS KEEP 'EM IN LINE.
RIGHT, WHITNER!
"MAN, I WOULDN'T MIND HAVIN' THAT AS A CELLMATE."
"KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF THE ONE WITH THE GLASSES -- HE'S MINE."
GET IN HERE. DON'T MAKE NO TROUBLE, AND EVERYTHING'LL BE FINE.
WHAT WILL HE DO WITH US, WARDEN?
HE HASN'T DECIDED YET. WHITNER WILL BE THE MOB LEADER ONLY AS LONG AS HE GIVES THE MOB SOMETHING THEY WANT.
OH, REALLY...?
I'VE GOT A PLAN, ACE. CAN YOU HELP ME OUT?
I'LL DO MY BEST.
THAT'S ALL I'LL NEED.
YOU MEN, LISTEN TO ME!
SIT DOWN, BITCH!
14

LET HER TALK!
YEAH!
YOU ALL WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ICEMAN--YOU THINK IF ME COULD GET KILLED IN HERE, SO COULD ANY OF YOU.
SO WHAT?
I CAN SOLVE THE ICEMAN'S MURDER!
WHAT?
ASK WHITNER AND DR. RUNE ABOUT ME! I PUT THEM HERE! I CAN FIND THE ICEMAN'S KILLER...
...AND TURN HIM OVER TO YOU--PROVIDED YOU RELEASE ME!
I DICTATE THE TERMS HERE, WOMAN, YOU--
LET HER TRY!
WE WANT WHOEVER OFFED THE ICEMAN!
YEAH!
YOU HAVE ALWAYS ESCHEWED MY COUNSEL BEFORE, WHITNER... PERHAPS YOU MIGHT FIND IT OF VALUE NOW.
I DON'T NEED YOUR "NEW AGE" BULL, RUNE!
15


THEN TRY A TACTIC GOOD FOR ANY AGE: LET THE MOB HAVE THEIR WAY--YOU CANNOT STOP THEM, AND THERE WILL SURELY BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO HAVE YOURS, AS WELL.
I GUESS SO.
I WILL NOT BE A PART OF THIS!
MISS MAYS, SPAULDING DESERVED TO DIE! I DON'T CARE WHO KILLED HIM--
YOU MAY WANT TO DIE A MARTYR, MR. JOHNSON, BUT I DON'T WANT TO DIE AT ALL!
THIS MAY BE THE ONLY CHANCE TO GET THE GONG ON OUR SIDE, AND I'M TAKING IT!
GOD BE WITH YOU YOUNG PEOPLE. YOU DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.
THANK YOU, MRS. SPAULDING. COME ON, ACE--IT'S SHOWTIME!
WE'LL NEED SOME CHAIRS, WHITNER.
GET HER WHATEVER SHE WANTS--INCLUDING ENOUGH ROPE.
OKAY, WHITNER.
YOU PUT YOUR SHOW ON IN THERE, MAYS--SO YOU WON'T FORGET WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU FAIL!
BANG
KRISSSH
16

from the desk of
Jennifer Mays

MAZE AGENTS

3622 Jacob Street, Wheeling, WV 26003

Major Apology: The wonderful inking job on ***MAZE AGENCY #13****, "Adventure of the Bleeding Venus", was done by* **Randy Elliott** (regular embellisher of our ***LEGENDS OF THE STARGRAZERS*** series), *not* **Rick Magyar**, *who regularly inks* ***THE MAZE AGENCY.***

Thanks, Randy, for the excellent inks; we apologize for the inaccurate credit.

To those ***MAZE AGENCY*** *readers interested in trivia, this issue was the first produced entirely under the auspices of our current home, Innovation Publishing. And, by an interesting coincidence, this is the seventh issue of* ***MAZE*** *published by Innovation, tying the "record" of our previous publisher, Comico. I'm not exactly sure if it's an anniversary, but I'm mighty glad to be able to celebrate, whatever the occasion is.*

As far as the story itself is concerned, the script deviates from reality at one very important juncture: there is currently no death penalty in New York State; but there ought to be.

--MWB

Dear Mike, Adam, and David (and Rick, too),
re: *MAZE AGENCY #9*

It was only fitting, Mike, that Gabe and Jen, your greatest creations, would one day meet the sleuth in whose magazine you got your start. "The English Channeler Mystery" was your best effort yet. I thought I had the case solved, but I fell for a red herring instead (Ha!). The challenge reminded me of the 1970's *Ellery Queen* series starring the late Jim Hutton, one of my all-time favorite TV series. I took the challenge, like I said, and lost. No big deal. I got my money's worth.

I won't waste much space commenting on the art, because I've run out -- almost, anyway -- of superlatives to properly describe Adam Hughes' pencil work. I'd probably be repeating myself from previous missives on this subject anyway. All that need be said is it rates a perfect "10."

Is there a chance, Mike, that you can get the rights to do a regular *Ellery Queen* mag, either as a mini-series or an ongoing title? If so, I'd be among the first ones in line to subscribe. I know Adam is busy these days pencilling for DC and may not be available, but I'd still make him my first choice to draw the book, allowing for an opening in his schedule.

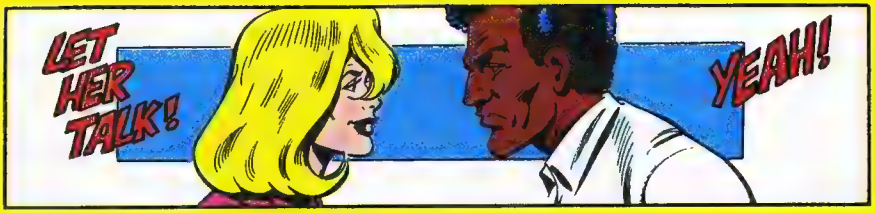
See you in 30,

Jacob Gilbert
Troy, NY

It seems like virtually every letter we received on ***MAZE #9*** *mentioned the Ellery Queen TV show of the middle '70's. Despite the fact that it was cancelled after one hard-fought season, it obviously remains a cult favorite among the literate -- kinda like* ***MAZE.***

As to the probability of a regular Ellery Queen title, well, I dunno. It certainly would be a ball, but there's no real indication that such a title would be able to support itself in the marketplace, the more so since there would be the added consideration of the licensing fee the estates of Manfred B. Lee and Frederic Dannay (Ellery Queen) would charge. So I think you'll just have to settle for re-reading any of the 35 novels, seven collections of short stories, or viewing the above-mentioned series, which some dealetrs make available on videotape. And some of the early versions of E.Q.'s TV incarnations have been released on videotape, including episodes starring Lee Bowman and Hugh Marlowe as Ellery. (You may remember Hugh Marlowe as the well-meaning but unsympathetic beau of Patricia Neal in The Day the Earth Stood Still, *where he turned Michael Rennie in to the feds. Boo!)*

--MWB



Dear Mike,

You know, if you had made this particular issue of ***THE MAZE AGENCY*** any easier, I would have begun to think that you were taking your audience for less than nothing. I will admit that the "who" was as easy as understanding organic chemistry, but the "why" was a mystery (surprise!) to me. I thought that once again it was well explained and very believable and logical. I think, what really helped me with the book was the guest appearance of E.Q. I hate to say it, but I got to know him (them?) through the 70's television show of the same name. But, shamefully, before that I was woefully illiterate of the numerous books and short stories starring him. Through the T.V. show I could be assured of a good, well thought-out script and at the least a very challenging one. Through that my logical skills grew and flourished. This issue was up to the standard of the T.V. series and I thank you for that.

I think what also helped this issue was the great visual aspect of the story that Adam and Rick brought to it. As usual, their artwork was in a class by itself. Their women were gorgeous; Lt. Bliss, especially. I liked their depiction of El (sorry; Ellery). It seemed to fit him better than any other way that I have seen him done or described.

Anyway, great issue, guys. I'm looking forward to the next one. Keep up the great work.

Galen S. West
Ponderosa Hall #23A
Fresno State University
Fresno, CA 93710

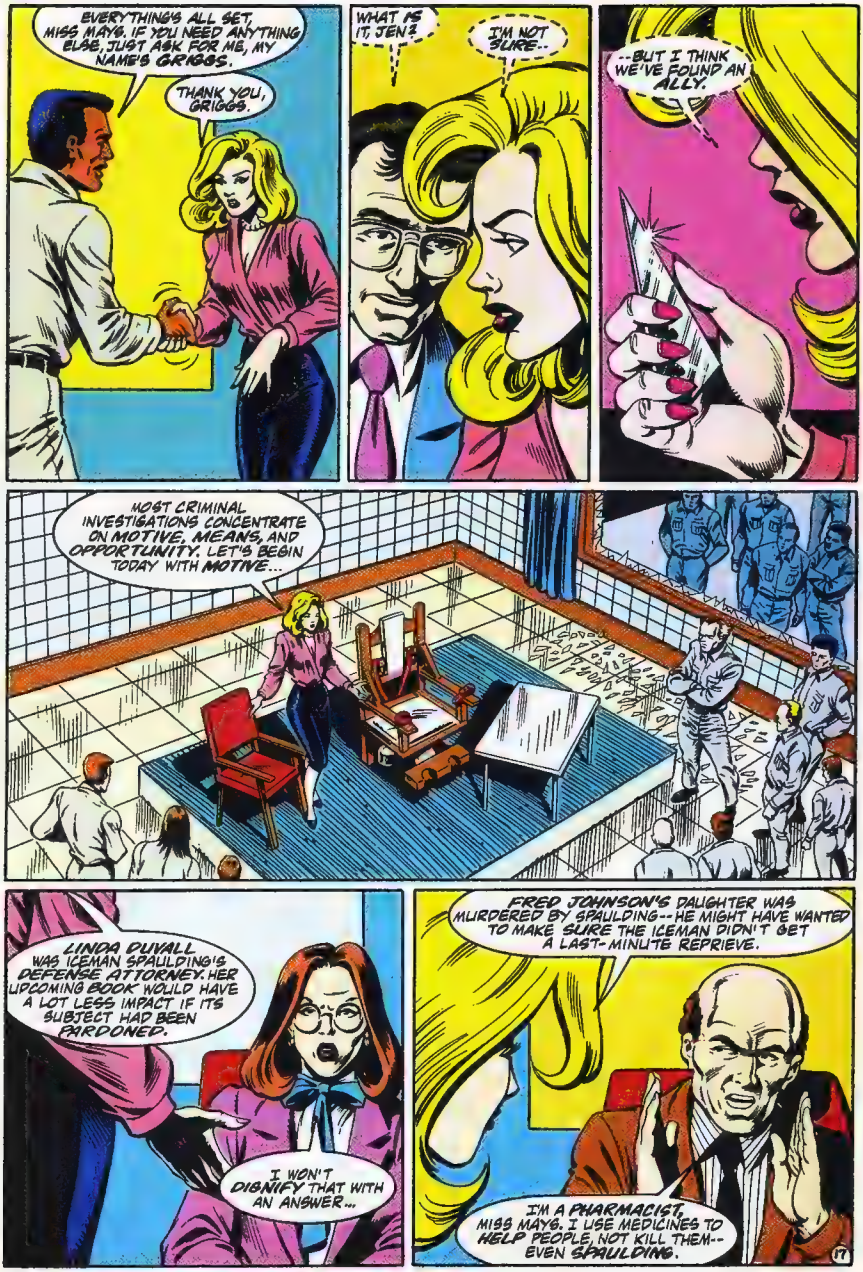
There's no need to apologize for having made the acquaintance of E.Q. and Company through the TV show, Galen, as it was by and large the best translation of the Queen canon to film that's yet been done. Besides, it got you interested in picking up the character's prose cases, and anything that sparks an interest in reading E.Q. is okay with —

--MWB

__NEXT ISSUE:__ Readers who have been clamoring for more details on the life of ***Lieutenant Bliss*** *will find their wish granted in* ***THE MAZE AGENCY #15.*** *The Lieutenant's ex-husband shows up, and when he's found murdered, guess who's the number one suspect? "Too Much Bliss" introduces* **Mike Okamoto** *(Anne Rice's* ***THE VAMPIRE LESTAT****) as guest penciller, embellished by* **Rick Magyar,** *as usual, and sports a cool cover by* **Jerry Bingham** *(who collaborated with yours truly on a little thing called* ***Son of Demon*** *a while back). Also, your comments on our new penciller* **Robb Phipps.** *(You* **are** *writing lots of letters to* ***MAZE AGENTS,*** *aren't you? Puh-leaze?)* **Be** *here for* ***THE MAZE AGENCY #15,*** *it'll be good!*

--Mike W. Barr

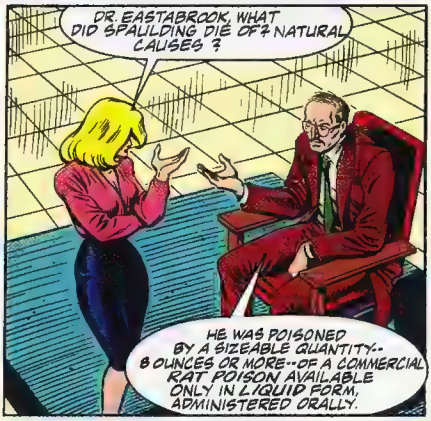
__INTO THE MAZE:__ ***THE MAZE AGENCY ANNUAL #1,*** on sale June 2, 1990, celebrates the 50th anniversary of Will Eisner's "The Spirit" by featuring a special seven-page tribute to the master storyteller and his most famous creation. (Readers who are unfamiliar with "The Spirit" are instructed to stand in the corner for an hour, then to run to your local comics shop and purchase as many issues of Kitchen Sink's *Spirit* comic as they have in stock -- right *after* you've Mylared your monthly quota of Innovation titles, natch.) Also in this issue will be a 17-page lead which advances the relationship of Jen and Gabe by a giant step, drawn by Allen Curtis. And as a bonus: The four-page "Murder At The Comiconvention," for the first time in color -- previously seen in its entirety only in ***MAZE BOOK #1.*** Art by Adam Hughes and Rick Magyar. Don't miss it!


EVERYTHING'S ALL SET, MISS MAYO. IF YOU NEED ANYTHING ELSE, JUST ASK FOR ME, MY NAME'S GRIGGS.
THANK YOU, GRIGGS.
WHAT IS IT, JEN?
I'M NOT SURE...
--BUT I THINK WE'VE FOUND AN ALLY.
MOST CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS CONCENTRATE ON MOTIVE, MEANS, AND OPPORTUNITY. LET'S BEGIN TODAY WITH MOTIVE...
LINDA DUVALL WAS ICEMAN SPAULDING'S DEFENSE ATTORNEY. HER UPCOMING BOOK WOULD HAVE A LOT LESS IMPACT IF ITS SUBJECT HAD BEEN PARDONED.
I WON'T DIGNIFY THAT WITH AN ANSWER...
FRED JOHNSON'S DAUGHTER WAS MURDERED BY SPAULDING--HE MIGHT HAVE WANTED TO MAKE SURE THE ICEMAN DIDN'T GET A LAST-MINUTE REPRIEVE.
I'M A PHARMACIST, MISS MAYO. I USE MEDICINES TO HELP PEOPLE, NOT KILL THEM--EVEN SPAULDING.

WARDEN CREIGHTON VERY MUCH WANTED SPAULDING DEAD--HE SAID SO HIMSELF.
BUT NOT ENOUGH TO RISK SULLYING A CAREER FOR.

AND LAST, MRS. ELLEN SPAULDING--THE ICEMAN'S MOTHER.
PLEASE DON'T CALL HIM THAT. HIS NAME WAS OSCAR. MISS MAYS, DO YOU HONESTLY THINK I COULD DO THAT TO MY OWN SON?

MOTIVE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE MUCH OF A HELP. HOWEVER, MOTIVES CAN BE DEEPLY HIDDEN, AND NOT READILY APPARENT. BETTER, THEN, TO DEAL WITH MEANS AND OPPORTUNITY.


DR. EASTABROOK, WHAT DID SPAULDING DIE OF? NATURAL CAUSES?
HE WAS POISONED BY A SIZEABLE QUANTITY--8 OUNCES OR MORE--OF A COMMERCIAL RAT POISON AVAILABLE ONLY IN LIQUID FORM, ADMINISTERED ORALLY.

AND HOW MUCH TIME WOULD ELAPSE BEFORE THE POISON WOULD TAKE EFFECT?
NOT LONG. HALF AN HOUR, MAXIMUM, PROBABLY MUCH LESS.

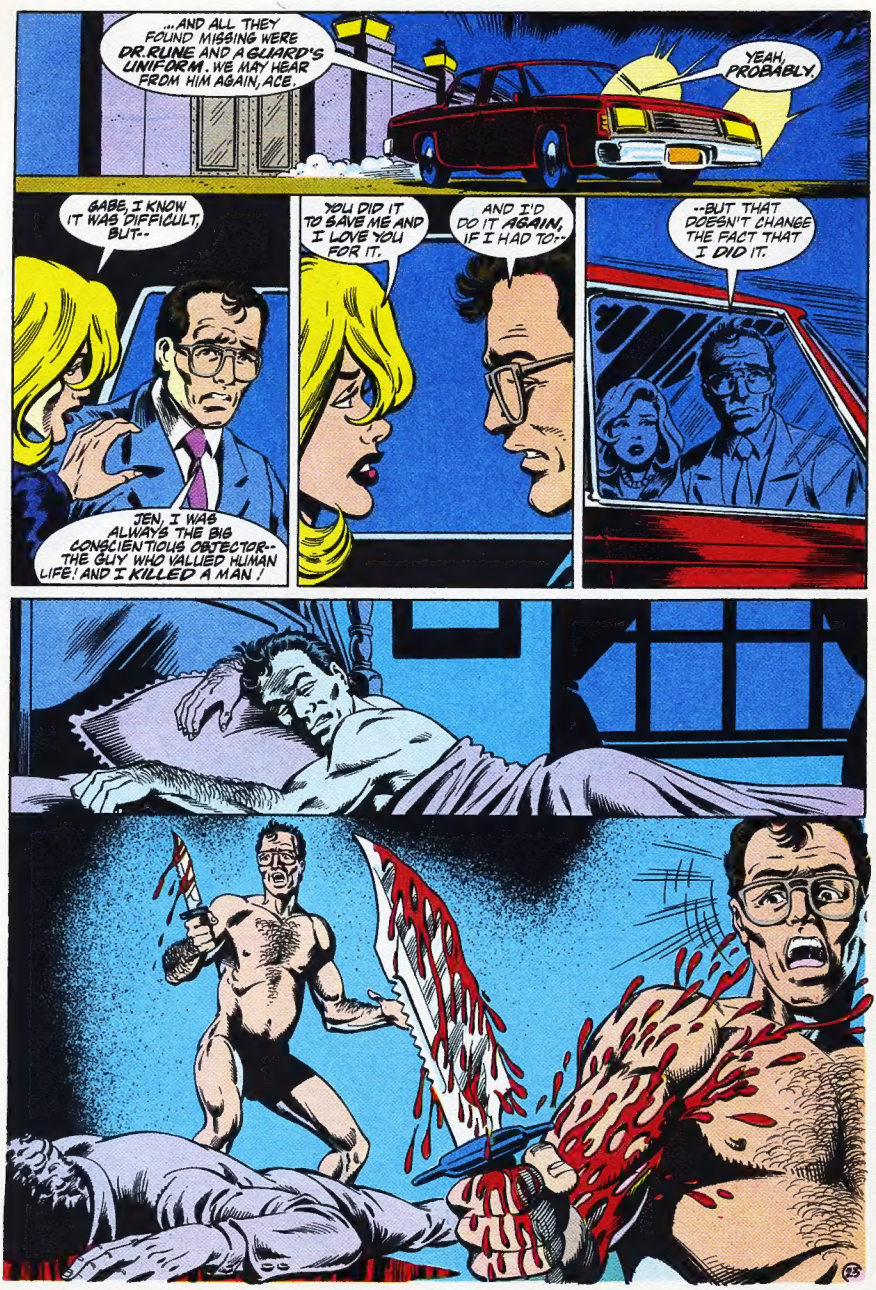
WARDEN CREIGHTON, ISN'T IT CUSTOMARY TO SEARCH ALL THE WITNESSES AND EXECUTIONERS AS THEY ENTER?
IT IS, YES. AND I DID. AS WELL AS ALL THE PRISON PERSONNEL WHO WERE PRESENT.
I'VE ALWAYS DONE MY DUTY, MISS MAYS.

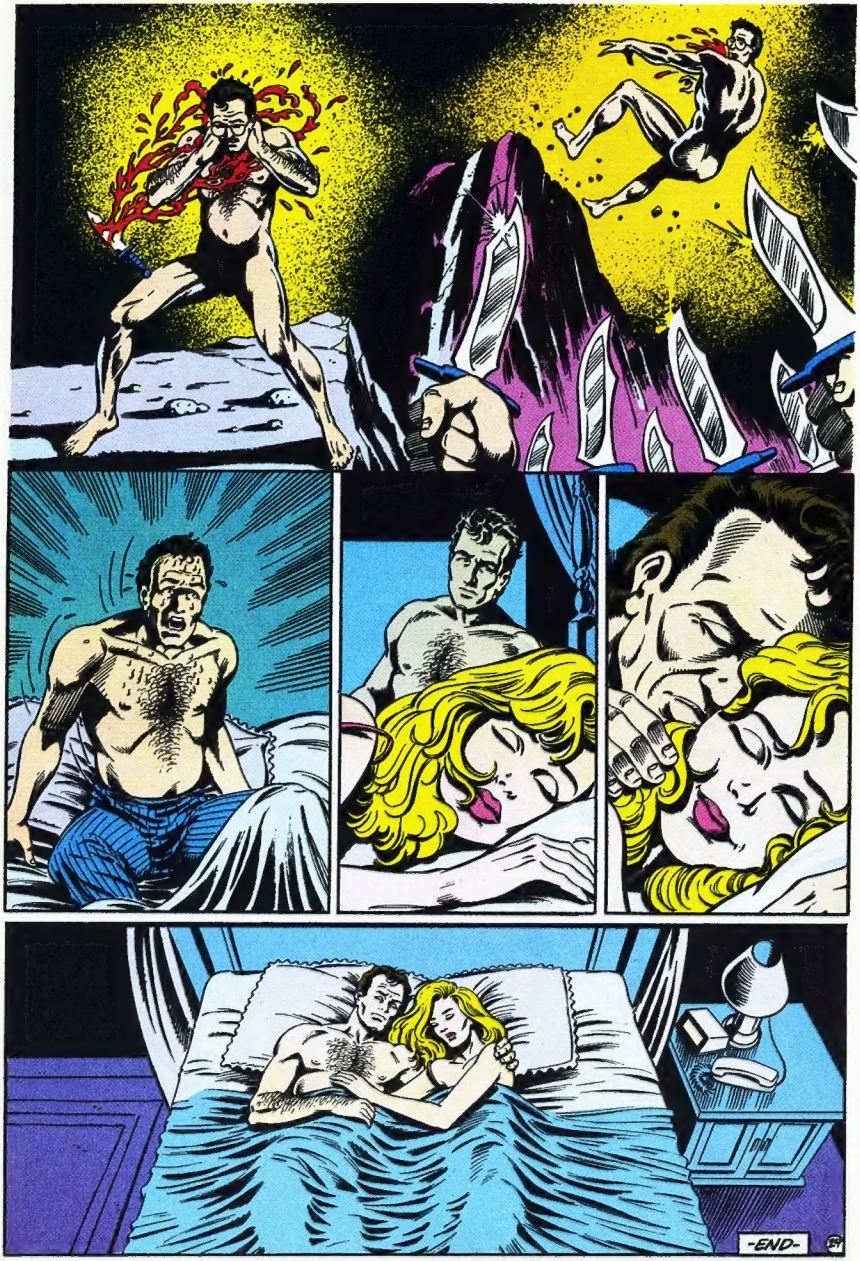
I'M SURE YOU HAVE, WARDEN. WERE ANY OF THE WITNESSES CARRYING CONTAINERS LARGE ENOUGH TO HOLD EIGHT OUNCES OF LIQUID?
JUST ONE...
MRS. SPAULDING, YOU BROUGHT TEA FOR THE--FOR YOUR SON IN THIS THERMOS, DIDN'T YOU?
I SURELY DID, MISS MAYS, TONIGHT AND MANY A TIME BEFORE.
YOUR TEA WAS THE ONLY THING SPAULDING DRANK IN THE HALF-HOUR TIME PERIOD, MRS. SPAULDING. THE POISON MUST HAVE BEEN CONTAINED IN THIS THERMOS--AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESIDUAL LIQUID BEARS THAT OUT.
CHILD, ARE YOU SAYING I--?
I'M SAYING THE POISON WAS CONTAINED IN YOUR THERMOS, MA'AM--NOT THAT YOU PUT IT THERE. THE THERMOS AND CAP ARE QUITE ORDINARY, WITHOUT ANY TYPE OF "SECRET CHAMBER," OR OTHER GIMMICKRY.
YOU ANALYZED THE CONTENTS OF THE THERMOS, DR. EASTABROOK.
YES--I ANALYZED ITS CONTENTS ON THE SPOT, MISS MAYS, BUT I NEVER TOUCHED THE THERMOS ITSELF. I COULDN'T HAVE ADDED POISON TO IT.
I AGREE, DOCTOR. AND YOUR STATEMENT IS BORNE OUT BY ONE OTHER PIECE OF EVIDENCE...

"MRS. SPAULDING HERSELF DRANK FROM THE THERMOS AFTER YOUR ANALYSIS, TO PROVE ITS CONTENTS WERE UNTAINTED."
MAYBE SHE TOOK SOME KINDA ANTIDOTE TO THE POISON BEFORE SHE DRANK FROM IT.
THAT POISON IS HIGHLY CORROSIVE TO THE SYSTEM-- NO ANTIDOTE WOULD ALLOW IT TO PASS THROUGH THE SYSTEM WITH NO EFFECT.
JEN, DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING? THIS THING IS IMPOSSIBLE!
IT CAN'T BE, GABE-- IT HAPPENED. I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT, ACE. COME ON.
SHE'S PUT OUT A LOTTA TALK, BUT THAT'S ALL! THEY MURDERED THE ICEMAN, AND THEY COULD KILL ANY OF US!
YOU MEN, LISTEN--
WE KNOW WHAT WE WANT, AND WE GOT HOSTAGES TO GET IT! IF THE GOVERNOR DON'T NEGOTIATE, I SAY WE BURN THIS PLACE DOWN!
YEAH!
RIGHT!
NOT SO FAST, WHITNER...

I'VE GOT IT, JEN.
JUST IN TIME! I WAS ALMOST OUT OF MATERIAL!
IT'S SIMPLE AS GRAVITY, REALLY! A METHOD BY WHICH A POISON CAN BE CONTAINED IN A THERMOS, YET NOT ONLY PASS DETECTION BY ANALYSIS, BUT NOT POISON THE WOMAN WHO DRANK FROM IT! THE METHOD...?
"THE POISON WAS CONTAINED INSIDE A THICK BLOCK OF FROZEN LIQUID--ICE! THE REMAINING TEA WOULD BE PERFECTLY SAFE TO DRINK UNTIL THE ICE MELTED, RELEASING THE POISON!"
ICE
POISON
BUT NO ONE HAD A CHANCE TO SLIP THE POISON INTO THE THERMOS, SO IT MUST HAVE BEEN IN THE THERMOS WHEN IT WAS BROUGHT INTO THE PRISON...!
IT WAS YOU, WASN'T IT, MRS. SPAULDING? YOU TIMED HOW QUICKLY THE ICE WOULD MELT ON ALL YOUR OTHER TRIPS TO SEE THE ICEMAN.
HIS NAME WAS OSCAR... YES, LORD FORGIVE ME, I DID IT. I NEVER MEANT FOR ANY OF THIS TO HAPPEN...
...BUT I COULDN'T LET MY SON GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS THE FIRST MAN EXECUTED IN YEARS. HE HAD TO PAY, BUT I WOULDN'T HAVE HIM REMEMBERED LIKE THAT...
THAT WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD SHOW HIM I LOVED HIM.
21

WAIT FIVE MINUTES, GRIGGS, THEN LET THE GUARDS IN.
RIGHT, DR. RUNE.
NO--!
34234
SOME SMALL TRIUMPH MAY YET BE SALVAGED FROM THIS DAY, BUT OUR INSURRECTION IS OVER.
121
YOU TAKE YOUR SMALL TRIUMPHS, RUNE--
--AND I'LL TAKE MINE!
JEN--!
22


...AND ALL THEY FOUND MISSING WERE DR. RUNE AND A GUARD'S UNIFORM. WE MAY HEAR FROM HIM AGAIN, ACE.
YEAH, PROBABLY.
GABE, I KNOW IT WAS DIFFICULT, BUT--
JEN, I WAS ALWAYS THE BIG CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR--THE GUY WHO VALUED HUMAN LIFE! AND I KILLED A MAN!
YOU DID IT TO SAVE ME AND I LOVE YOU FOR IT.
AND I'D DO IT AGAIN, IF I HAD TO--
--BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT I DID IT.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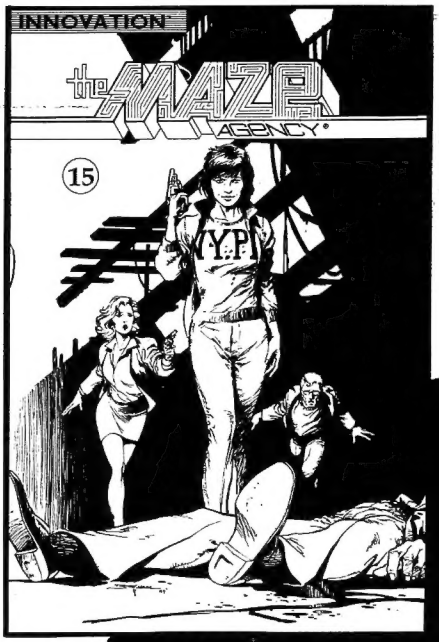
LEGENDS OF THE STARGRAZERS™ #6 -- Full-color mini-series. Book-length good girl art adventure! "All The Sins That Are My Life" reveals the startling secrets of Julie Green! By **Cynthy J. Wood, David Campiti, Matt Thompson & Randy Elliott.** Spanking-new cover by **Adam Hughes!**



THE JUSTICE MACHINE™ #3 -- Full-color series. If you thought last issue got nasty, you ain't seen nothin', yet! "The Ragnarok Portfolio: Part Two" is by **Mark Ellis & Mike Gustovich.** Cover by **Darryl Banks & Mike Gustovich!**

NEWSTRALIA™ #4 -- B&W mini-series. It's back -- the startling saga from down under of a rascally rogue, his robot, and his Roo! "Jaws of the Desert" is by **Stephen Sullivan, John Hebert & Mike Witherby.** Cover by **Timothy Truman!**

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STRAW MEN™ #8 -- (All-American Comics) B&W mini-series. In Gate, Oklahoma; "The End" comes to a terrifying tale of mutagenics and obsession. By **Michael Vance, R.A. Jones, Rob Davis & Mark Runyon.** Cover painting by **Rob Davis!**

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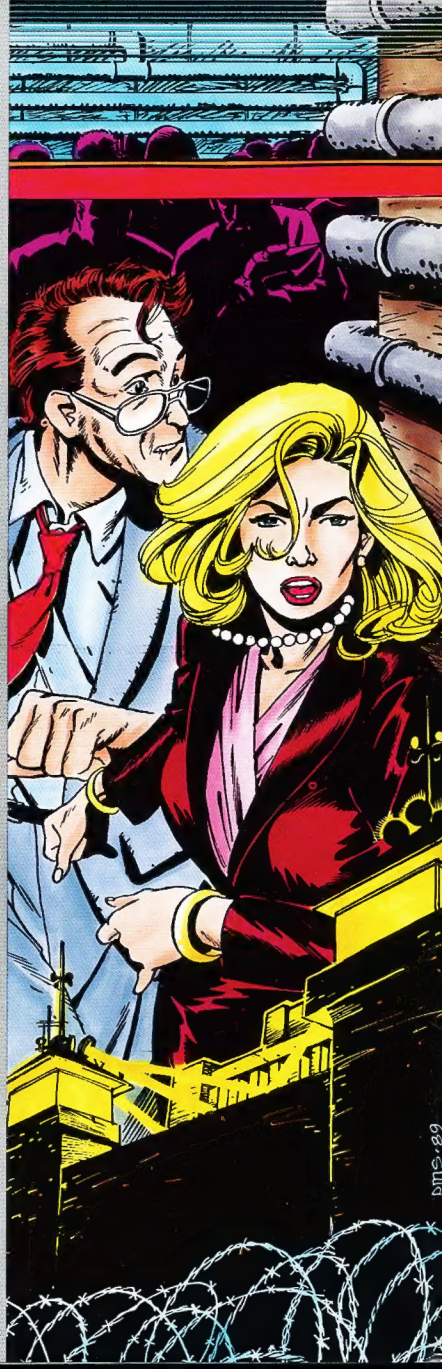
1^{95} U.S./2^{50} Can.

Innovation welcomes **Paul Smith** to the cover artwork for this, perhaps the most startling issue of ***THE MAZE AGENCY*** yet! Join us in another fair-play whodunit that challenges you to solve the mystery as it unfolds!

THIS ISSUE: In "Before Midnight," New York's prettiest detective, *Jennifer Mays*, and true crime writer *Gabriel Webb*, go to a prison to witness the execution of a criminal Jennifer once caught. One minute before the execution, the convicted criminal dies -- of *poisoning* -- in the electric chair!

Amid a prison full of rioting convicts, Jen and Gabe struggle to solve the mystery of the poisoner...if they survive that long!

Murdered -- Before He Can Be Executed!